

Nation, Ordnance Chief Declares on Visit Here

Co-operation of Public And Congress Needed, General Asserts

Co-operation from congress, industry and the public, and less "name calling," are needed if the Joliet arsenal and similar installations which represent the military strength of the United States are to remain as a permanent guard against aggression and future wars.

This was the opinion expressed by Maj. Gen. E. S. Hughes, chief of ordnance and a former member of Gen. Dwight Eisenhower's staff in the European theater of operation, following a tour of the arsenal Friday.

Gen Hughes painted a non-too bright picture for members of the arsenal staff and the press. The picture affects the welfare of Joliet, Will county, the United States and the world, he pointed out.

"IT'S RATHER sad when one sees a big installation like this almost closed down and the ordnance department wondering where the money will come from to keep it going," Gen. Hughes commented.

Asked how long it would take to convert the arsenal from a stand-by basis to full production in case the need arises, the general said:

"I'm wondering about that when I see how long it has taken to convert the Kankakee portion of the plant to the fertilizer production program. (This required three months.)

"Every month that the plant remains idle means just that much more time will be needed to return it to effective status. I believe money should be appropriated immediately for maintenance purposes. If the Congress of the United States is in favor of stand-by plants there should be an item openly appropriated. We should not have to obtain our operating money from 'camouflaged' sources, as is the case at present.

"WE ARE operating now on an uncertain basis. We do not yet know how many of the original 67 plants will be maintained on a stand-by basis. Presently there are 20 thus classified," he added.

Gen. Hughes was quick to point out that the condition of the Joliet arsenal is much better than that of any of the numerous other stand-by plants he has inspected recently.

"Joliet's arsenal is something that should be maintained," he said. "It's much better constructed than any other plant and is good all the way thru. It obviously and definitely should be maintained."

The chief of ordnance, with jurisdiction over some 87,000 men—the corps second only in size in the U. S. army to the engineers—concluded that none of the acreage in the six mile square tract should be offered as "surplus" nor should any of the plant buildings be sold.

"I SEE NO reason why any of the land has to be sold," Gen. Hughes said. "All the fertile land should continue to be leased as is now the practice. There are very few acres not being used in some way now."

Col. Carroll Hudson, commanding officer of the installation, added that full utility of the land is being realized thru leasing hundreds of acres to farmers for raising crops.

Recently the Reserve Officers association of Will county asked if a part of the land could be used for storing equipment which will be assigned to a full staffed reserve unit in this area.

"I'M IN FAVOR of using the ground for anything which means preparedness," Gen. Hughes reiterated.

"You see, there has to be a big team at work. The public must know how its money for taxes is being spent—and why it is being spent that way. I am going to do everything in my power to help keep the Joliet arsenal as a permanent installation."

When informed that the public in this area favors keeping the plant permanent primarily because local residents are interested in a source of employment, Gen. Hughes appeared disturbed.

HE POINTED out that jobs may be important at the mo-



Veteran of both World wars and the Mexican Punitive campaign, Maj. Gen. E. S. Hughes (right), chief of ordnance, this Friday visited the Joliet arsenal, as a stop on his present national tour of inspection. When he returns to Washington he will present pertinent information in seeking congressional aid for maintenance of such plants as the arsenal. Shown with the general as he arrived for the day's visit are, left to right: Col. Carroll Hudson, commanding officer of the plant; Don M. Compton, chief of the Chicago ordnance district; and Col. Joel Holmes, field director of ammunition plants. (Joliet Arsenal photo.)

ment but that over a period of years it will be a program of preparedness which will have more direct influence on the lives, not only of Jolietans, but of the entire world populace.

"There are two principal obstacles in our way," Gen. Hughes stressed. "The first is that we're accused of being 'war mongers' when we continue in our attempts to keep America armed; the second is that if manufacturers are seen together discussing plans, they are immediately accused of violating the Sherman anti-trust law. The ordnance department manufactures nothing save an occasional truck or so and yet when we seek the co-operation of industry for full effect of our program, we're thrown under that suspicious light."

In the office of Col. Joel Holmes, field director of ammunition plants is a statement issued many months ago by Gen. Hughes. Enclosed in glass and framed, it states: "The ordnance department has, as everyone knows, done an exceedingly difficult job, and done it well. There is, however, no necessity for continuing to review that fact except for the purpose of reassuring ourselves that having done a good job, we can do another."

THE FORTHCOMING job is much bigger than the one just finished, he indicated. It is the task of the army, aided and abetted by the civilian population. It is the role of the high-

school student maintaining an interest in his ROTC training; it is the work of the enlisted men's reserve and the reserve officers continuing in their efforts to keep physically fit, up to the minute on military procedures and how to handle latest equipment; it is the responsibility of the man volunteering for service in the armed forces; lastly, it is John Q. Public's assignment to keep interested in world activities and to pay his taxes. That sums up the general's VIEWS.